or serious injury in this incident. The affected district has been sealed off and the exact damage can be assessed only after the same is reopened. A high level committee has been appointed under the Chief General Manager (Production), Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. to inquire into the causes and circumstances leading to the fire and to make recommendations to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

Duty free import of coal

1483. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has urged Government to allow industrial units duty free import of coal to tide over the persistent coal shortage;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to consider the demand of FICCI; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The proposal is under examination of the Government.

कोयले के मूल्यों में वृद्धि करने के लिए मध्य प्रदेश का प्रस्ताव

1484. श्री **अजीत जोगी** : क्या **कोयला** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या केंद्रीय सरकार को मध्य प्रदेश सरकार से विभिन्न श्रेणियों के कोयले के मूल्यों में वृद्धि करने संबंधी कोई प्रस्ताव प्राप्त हुआ है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(ग) क्या अन्य राज्यों से भी इस तरह की मांगें की गयी हैं ; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो उन पर क्या कार्यवाही की जा रही है ?

कोयला मंत्रालय में उप मंत्री (श्री एस० बी० नयमेगौंडा) : (क) और (ख) इस संबंध में उपलब्ध सूचना के अनुसार ऐसे कोई प्रस्ताव प्राप्त नहीं हुए हैं ।

(ख) और (घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठता ।

Legislation for privatisation of Coal Industry

1485. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to bring legislation for privatisation of coal mines; and

(b) if so, whether Government have already started leasing out some of the coal mines owned by them?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI S. B. NYAMAGOUDA): (a) The Government, at present, has no proposal to privatise the existing coal mines. However, the Government have decided to allow private sector participation in coal mining operation in virgin area for the purpose of captive consumption for power generation and other end uses, as well as to set up coal washeries. A Bill has been introduced in the Parliament to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in order to implement the above decision of the Government.

(b) No, Sir.

Proposal for transport technology of Coal

1486. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received a Research